Training workshop

Core skills and competencies

The Atlas.ti training workshop had two main aims:
1) General – to train research teams in some generic qualitative data analysis techniques
2) Particular – to train research teams in the use of a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package called Atlas.ti

Workshop design

The training was divided into five sections as outlined in the training workbook:
1) Issues of data management
2) Development of coding frame
3) Hands-on coding of data
4) Issues of data analysis
5) Advanced techniques and revision

In Ghana and Pakistan, each section was allocated approximately one day and the workshop took place over five days. In Kenya, the available time for the workshop was halved, and so each section was allocated only half a day.

Teaching and learning techniques

Generic qualitative data analysis techniques were addressed through a mind-mapping exercise that entailed small group work followed by presentations and discussions with the whole team. Atlas.ti training was practical, with each participant making use of a personal computer. Following overhead presentations on each of the main Atlas.ti functions, participants worked independently through the examples described in detail in their workbooks. All participants completed each stage before the whole group moved onto the next exercise. Towards the end of the workshop, skills acquisition was verified through an individual exercise in which participants were asked to run a series of functions on Atlas.ti and then present their findings. Revision entailed a lengthy question and answer session on the final day.

Partner institutions

Associates for Change, Accra, Ghana

Ten Associates for Change (AfC) researchers participated in the workshop. The AfC research team had been working on the Youth, Gender and Citizenship study, which provided data used in the workshop. We discussed general approaches to qualitative data analysis, redeveloped the coding frame for the YGC project using the mind-mapping exercise, and covered all the main functions of Atlas.ti, concluding by strategising and finalising the next steps for the research team.

Mahbub Ul Haq Human Development Centre, Islamabad, Pakistan

Nine Mahbub Ul Haq Human Development Centre (MHHDC) researchers participated in the workshop. The MHHDC research team had been working on two studies: the female researchers on the Fertility and Health study and the male researchers on the Skills study. Using a mind-mapping exercise, the female researchers finalised the Fertility and Health coding frame alongside the version already in use in India, whilst the male researchers discussed issues arising from their data collection which might affect the analysis of the data collected under the Skills study.

<u>Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya</u>

Seven Kenyatta University (KU) researchers participated in the workshop. The KU research team had been working on Youth, Gender and Citizenship study, although with considerable interruptions as a result of the political turmoil. The workshop took place in only half the time of the other workshops, but the KU researchers have more prior research experience than those in the Ghana and Pakistan teams, so we were therefore able to concentrate on the software rather than on more generic qualitative data analysis skills.

Participants' evaluations

Evaluation forms were completed by each participant in each team. Positive feedback from all countries highlighted the participatory and practical nature of the training methods and the general relevance of the workshop content to their research needs. In Ghana, the only improvement suggested by seven of the ten respondents was that a longer workshop would reduce the level of intensity. In Pakistan, participants emphasised that they felt the software training was applicable to a wide range of research projects. In Kenya, participants noted their intention to make use of the Atlas.ti workbook to train other researchers in qualitative data analysis.

Impacts and capacity building

This workshop used data already collected by the research teams as part of particular RECOUP studies to illustrate general issues in qualitative data analysis and to practice the main functions of the Atlas.ti software. Across the board, participants highlighted that they had acquired transferable skills applicable not only to the analysis of the current RECOUP studies but also to other RECOUP studies and to other qualitative research projects in the future.